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DISCUSSION

THE CARD INDEX FOR TEACHERS

The card-index system of records is too little known to teachers, but should prove particularly serviceable to them. Educators are notoriously conservative, and for the most part yet retain antiquated methods of recording the progress of their pupils. The classbook, which is still in almost universal use, is far inferior to the index card.

The ordinary classbook has a column on the left-hand side of the page for the names of the pupils; and to the right, covering two or more pages, there follows a crosshatch arrangement of squares in which the attendance and recitation marks are noted. The most important disadvantages of this method are three in number. First, there is not space enough to set down anything but a few arbitrary symbols, which cannot convey an adequate idea of the pupil as an individual. Second, to consult the pupil's whole record it is usually necessary to turn over one or more leaves of the book. Third, and most important, the method does not permit of convenient indexing. If, at any time after the school term is over, the teacher desires to find the record of a particular pupil, he must first recall the year in which the pupil studied, or else look through perhaps a considerable number of classbooks for the sake of finding the right one.

The card system involves the use of a separate card for each pupil. Consequently it has none of the disadvantages mentioned above. Cards can be used of a size adequate for recording any amount of information about the pupils. The whole record of the pupil for the entire course can be seen at a glance. Finally, the cards permit of convenient indexing, so that access to the card of any pupil can always be had at a moment's notice.

The design of the card depends of course on the particular purpose it is to serve. The accompanying illustration shows a card in use by a teacher of English composition in one of the large universities. The blanks at the top are filled in by the student at the beginning of the semester. The date fixes the time at which the course is taken. "Where prepared" indicates the preparatory school. The dates of birth, etc., enable the teacher to form an idea of the degree of maturity of the pupil and his success in completing the high-school course in the usual time; also to ascertain whether there was an interval between his leaving the high school and entering the university.

The other blanks are for the teacher to use. Those at the left, numbered 1 to 50, are for recording the essays which the pupil writes; here may be noted the quality of each composition and any prevailing fault or merit. The cross-hatch lines at the right afford space for recording the student's daily attendance, recitations, etc. It will be noted that the ordinary classbook comprises

only this space. The blank spaces headed "Reading" and "Notebook" enable the teacher to make a final comments on these particular parts of the work. At the end of the semester one of the marks "A," "B," etc., is checked to indicate the final standing of the student; similarly one of the other symbols may be checked to indicate that the student is "passed" or "not passed," or has received a "light," "medium," or "heavy" condition. Space is afforded at the bottom of the card and on the reverse side for remarks.

A particular feature of this card is the opportunity it affords for either of two ways of indexing. During the semester in which the course is given the cards are arranged alphabetically according to the names of the students. But

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when, at the end of the course, the records have been transcribed and sent to the office, the cards are thereafter arranged according to the names of the high schools from which the students have come. The second arrangement permits a ready tabulation of the records of all the students for a particular high school. For, as the university accepts students on the diploma system, that is, admits without examination those recommended by certain high schools, it is desirable to keep track of the records of students thus recommended. If it is found that too large a proportion of its students fail in the university, a high school may be notified and warned, and, if necessary, dropped from the accredited list. This is only one of the special purposes to which the teacher will find the card system of records accommodated.

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